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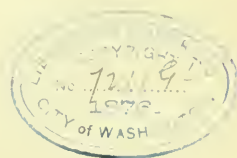
CENTENNIAL OFFERING.

BY

LUNARIAN.

Henry Augustus Abraham

Illustrated.



NEW YORK:

ORVILLE JARVIS, 15 SPRUCE STREET.

1876.

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W. W. W.

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Respectfully Dedicated

TO

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

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INTRODUCTION.



THIS little work is the result of considerable thought concerning some of the worst social crimes and abuses which, in this Centennial year, degrade the city of New York. It has been offered because the writer deems that, while so much is being done for art and science, something also should be accomplished in the interest of humanity and morality; and it is addressed not so much to the learned, who scarcely can be unacquainted with the particulars here set forth, as to the ordinary citizen who has hitherto looked lazily on a sea of iniquity, without giving a thought to his weaker brethren who are being swamped therein, or attempting by his own individual effort to arrest future disaster. By a perusal of the following pages the reader, who may be altogether ignorant of the subject of social reform, or, rather, who has given it little or no attention, may become acquainted, almost at a glance, with the crimes and evils which most beset society, as well as with the remedies that are proposed for their abatement. Having read, let them, if not for themselves, at least for the sake of their pure children, and the innocents yet unborn, make social reform their constant and earnest study, seeking every opportunity to be heard in its behalf; thus, at no very distant date New York, rich in all that is beautiful and pure, will become not only a noble example to other cities of the Republic, but the whole Christian world shall sound her praise.





"The city is not changed, but its people are."
(See page 19.)

NEWER YORK.

MY FRIEND B——, a professional man of very limited means, but highly respected by the community in which he lived, left his family to make a flying visit to New York on some private business which he found would detain him one night in the city, for which possibility he had prepared his young wife, assuring her, at the same time, that under no circumstances would he allow himself to be delayed later than the following evening.

Not having seen B—— for some years, I was somewhat surprised at receiving a note from him stating that he was a prisoner in the House of Detention, and begging me to visit him there without delay. Thither I hastened with all speed, wondering as I went what could have caused the incarceration of so quiet, gentlemanly and inoffensive a person as my valued friend. I found him nervous and alarmed; and, before I had time to ask him what had brought him to such a pass, he besought me to “go bail” for him, mentioning an amount considerably beyond my means.

Having assured him, however, that I should do my utmost to obtain bail for him among my acquaintances, I naturally desired to learn the reason of his imprisonment.

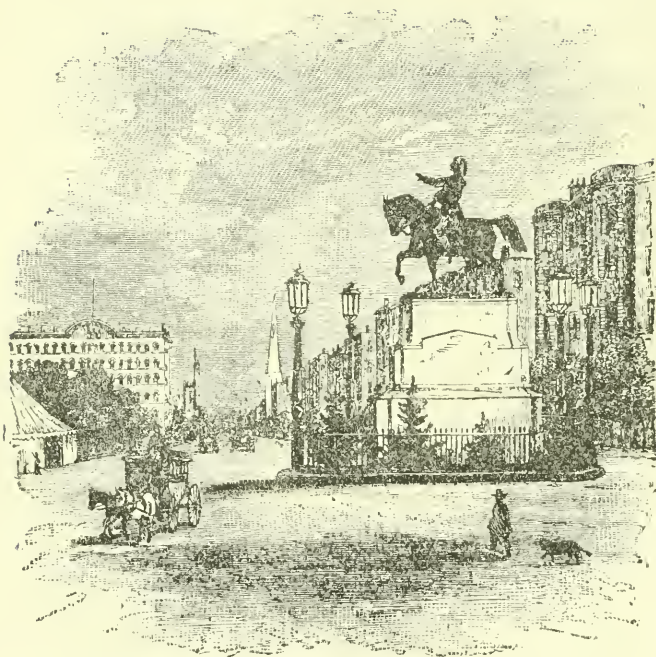
In answer to my inquiry my friend gave me the following history :

“Last night I happened to witness a brutal assault on a gentleman by a thorough ruffian, and deemed it my duty to assist in procuring his arrest. I accompanied the officer to the station-house where, owing to the impertinent questioning of the little power behind the rail, I had almost to ask myself whether I was really B—— or some disreputable individual who had wantonly disturbed the public peace, to say nothing of his own. I sunk a few degrees lower in my own estimation when, on hearing that I was a stranger and almost unacquainted in New York, brief authority informed me that it thought as much, and at once locked me up. From that moment to the present I have been as a malefactor in the hands of the law, and, but for your generous promise, might so remain indefinitely.

I was now doubly anxious to serve my friend, and, with a few encouraging words, left him with the assurance that I would find some one to “go” his bail if it were within my power so to do. I was to report that day, in time to release him, if successful.

I had no very definite idea how to go about my self-imposed task, which I really considered a labor of love, and was angry with the law which, on the eve of the Centennial year, inflicted such punishment on the innocent; but I soon settled down quietly to my work, and, in a systematic way, visited such of my friends as I believed capable of the friendly act which would enable me to inform B—— that he might return rejoicing to the bosom of his family.

I was unsuccessful : It is not necessary here to state why; although I may remark that it was on the same



“ Washington's Monument is in the same old place.”
(See page 19.)

principle by which men without a bank account generally, on an emergency, fail to meet their urgent necessities, even though "friends" may be earnestly besought. Therefore, let the bare fact suffice, I was unsuccessful.

I pass over my own sad regrets and B——'s mental misery; with tears in his eyes he spoke of his young wife, and the anxiety she would experience at his prolonged absence. There was the telegraph, but I had been so delayed that that would not avail him until the morning. "She will be frantic," cried the poor fellow who, lowering his voice to a sad whisper, added that she was not in a condition to bear undue excitement without danger.

Seldom had I been so grieved at another's trouble, and I felt ashamed to know that I was a citizen of a State which coldly and methodically committed a flagrant outrage on my fellow countryman, and called such outrage Law !

My cheek burned with righteous indignation, and, while sadly directing my steps homeward, I thought of the many unnecessary wrongs to which the people of New York almost un murmuringly submit. I asked myself whether there were no philanthropist with energy enough to stir the phlegm of those who wield the power in this "Land of the free."

Absorbed in my theme, I "burned the midnight oil" in penning an impotent tirade against some of the abuses to which the public tamely and weakly submit.

Although no novice at the pen, the more I wrote the more I felt the arduousness, if not the impossibility of suggesting to wiser heads, though possibly to harder hearts than my own, proper remedies for the evils which I was condemning with a vigor born of disgust at B's

ruthless treatment, and of my own utter helplessness in the matter.

I was disturbed from a reverie or a doze, I knew not at the time which, by the sudden appearance of my genial acquaintance and co-laborer in the literary field, G——, of the *N. Y. Morning Bitters*, who nearly knocked me off my chair, as he slapped me on the back, shook hands with me violently, and asked how long I had been back.

“Been back,” I exclaimed: “From where?”

“From the moon, of course,” he replied. “You have been away some few years.”

I looked up at him in amazement, and expressed a fear that he had been imbibing too freely.

Denying the impeachment, he coolly declared that he was glad to see me back in Newer York.

“Newer York!” I cried. “You are as bad as the little *gamins* who sing out ‘*Daily Newers!*’”

“Ah!” said he, quietly, “you are ignorant of the fact that this city has been re-christened during your absence, and is now known as NEWER YORK.”

I smiled incredulously.

Taking from his pocket a paper, he pointed to its title. The paper was a copy of the *N. Y. Herald*, and, glancing at the headline, I saw, to my intense surprise, the words, “NEWER YORK” in bold type.

I now began to feel that there was some truth in my friend’s statement that I had been absent from the city, and, with an effort to appear calm, I asked him in what year we were.

“Eighteen hundred and eighty, old fellow,” he responded. “The inhabitants of the moon evidently do do not keep an account of time.”



“The worst mannered are kept apart from the better disposed prisoners.”—(See page 29.)

Concealing my alarm, I asked whether the city were not altered.

"The city," he replied, "is not changed, but its people are, thank God! Washington's monument is in the same old place, and externally most things are in *statu quo*."

"Indeed," I murmured in a sort of helpless way; and then told him in a few words of B——'s trouble and my own anxiety about him, ending by asking if he could help us.

This request he considered a huge joke, and said that I had quite forgotten my lengthened sojourn.

"No such cruelty can be inflicted now-a-days in Newer York," he added. "The gross wrong probably never would have been remedied, had not a gentleman of considerable note, and who is now in the legislature, been detained for a short time as a prisoner in the jail in which your friend was incarcerated, while the criminal was at large on bail. He at once drafted a bill which gave any *respectable* witness the right to go at large as soon as his testimony was taken by the sergeant, police captain, or justice, as the case might be, before whom he presented himself in the interests of society."

"Did not Mr. Seth C. Hawley, once the chief clerk of the Metropolitan Police, prepare a similar bill?" I inquired, in a sort of imbecile way, determining, since the conversation was becoming so interesting, to consider myself, for the nonce at least, to be the man from the moon.

"He did prepare a bill, but it fell through, not even having been tabled. His bill, however, would not have provided immediate freedom for the innocent witness, as did our legislator's, who, having tasted the bitters of a

most inequitable and cruel law, fought vigorously for the success of his project, and with perfect victory. Would you believe that one-half of the honorable body heard, for the first time in their lives that, in this country of boasted freedom, there was an institution filled with persons charged with no crime or offense—a prison in fact—ill-ventilated, dirty, wretched! ‘Gentlemen,’ cried our legislator, as he wound up a most trenchant peroration, ‘put yourselves in the place of a poor but worthy stranger, far from the family that depended upon him for the daily necessities of life, and ask yourselves whether they or the state have a prior claim to your person. Gentlemen,’ he continued, ‘some three hundred individuals were last year barbarously ranked with the common felon; many of these became ruined in health and fortune, many almost lost their reason while daily pondering on the irreparable wrong done to them and theirs; and when, finally, their prison doors being thrown open, they crept to their homes and penates, and gazed on the sadly changed faces of their loved ones, also sacrificed to the idiocy or selfish apathy of our honorable body, can you wonder that they should have cursed the cause of their desolation.’

This, and much more did he say to the same purpose, and the bill was passed unanimously.

“Surely, there were some dissentient voices?” I remarked.

“Not many. A few weak-minded individuals, with particularly low foreheads, took umbrage at the term ‘idiocy,’ and fought vigorously for the downfall of the measure. Embodied in the bill were the following able and telling remarks of Mr. Thos. C. Acton, the Presi-





“ The fallen woman is borne off privately.”
(See page 50.)

dent of the Board of Metropolitan Police in the annual report of the department of 1868.

“ ‘This system, instead of aiding, probably tends to embarrass the successful punishment of crime. Persons cognizant of facts, which, if known, would lead to the arrest and conviction of a criminal, endeavor to avoid the hazard of being imprisoned as a witness for an uncertain period by concealing their knowledge or refusing to appear as prosecutor or witness. If they are themselves the victims of the crime they often prefer to suffer the wrong, whatever it may have been, rather than incur the risk of further wrong by being imprisoned as a witness.

“ ‘The current expense of this institution for the year, paid by this department, has been \$8,494.51. The property occupied for this purpose is worth probably more than \$100,000, and would bring an annual rent of \$10,000, making a total cost of \$18,494.51.

“ ‘Such oppressive measures ought not to be tolerated in a free and Christian country, if there is any remedy to be found within the scope of legislative authority consistent with an effective enforcement of criminal laws.’ ”

“ ‘Poor B——!’ I murmured; “this excellent law came too late for you.” My thoughts naturally turned to the friend, concerning whom G—— could, of course, give me no information; but much interested in the subject under discussion, I asked whether the ends of justice might not be defeated by giving immediate freedom to the witness.

“ ‘Not at all,’ replied G——, “for the State undertakes the punishment of any individual who maliciously accuses or furnishes false testimony to the District Attorney, before whom he is compelled to present him-

self. This testimony is used as evidence when the witness cannot appear at the trial; but I am informed that such a witness is almost invariably forthcoming when wanted."

"You refer now," I queried, "to the respectable witness; how about those who are not in the category, and how are they to be discriminated?"

"Where" responded G——, "there is reasonable doubt, the witness is held for a brief period. Any persons known to the police as disreputable, or any who cannot give a proper account of themselves, either have to find bail for their appearance when wanted, or are kept in the House of Detention. But such cases are very rare, thus proving that the measure referred to is not only a most righteous, but an entirely effective one."

Deeply interested in what I had heard, I requested G—— to inform me of any other changes that had taken place, during my involuntary visit to the Moon.

I found him not only ready, but most willing to enlighten me on many matters of which I was ignorant.

"Prepare for a surprise my moon-struck friend," said he, "*we do not hang for murder now.*"

"What *on earth* then do you do with your murderers?" I cried.

"Imprison them for life," he replied. "Society has at length realized the awful fact that it has been *guilty of murder* in taking the life, by hanging, of him who has deprived his fellow man of existence. The Centennial year brought with it serious obligations which philanthropy, morality and Christianity dared not ignore."

"Blessed Centennial!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, sir," G—— proceeded; "and, I can assure you



“The New York gamin used to fight and swear. The Newer York boy does not.”—(See page 35.)

that Newer York has had no reason to regret the abolition of Capital punishment."

"Do you mean to say that murder is on the decrease?" I asked.

"I do," replied G—: "'murderer's row' is no longer looked upon as the abode of the martyred; and the morbid-minded have lost at least one excitement, for they get no invitations to witness a hideous spectacle."

"What does the State now do with such criminals?" I asked.

"Murderers," responded G—, "are treated somewhat as follows: those who have premeditated murder and deprived another of life deliberately for gain, abortionists whose victims have died under their hands, and the wretches who have been proved guilty of rape, are condemned to imprisonment for life."

"Those who for any real or fancied personal wrong, or in the heat of altercation destroy life, are classed in the second degree, and, according to circumstances, are sent to prison for terms varying from ten to twenty years." Those who, in self defense, or to avenge the honor of a wife or other near relative, put another to death are sometimes dealt with more mercifully, according to surrounding circumstances at the time of the commission of the crime. To enter more fully into particulars would occupy too much time, and I can only give you the law as I understand it; but it works admirably, and there is general rejoicing over the abolishment of the death penalty which has ever been held in abhorrence by the christian world. But I must not forget to tell you that there is no distinction made between the sane murderer and him whose defense is insanity: except

that the latter is sent to the Insane Asylum until he is pronounced by proper medical authority to have been restored to his normal condition of mind."

"Is he then free?" I asked.

"By no means. He is at once transferred to the State prison, where he is kept *for fear he might get mad again*. Bear in mind I am merely giving you the law in the matter, for, since its amendment in this regard, we have had no insane murderers; if we should have, we are ready to meet their case. Oh! this law has had a healthy influence, and I doubt if any criminal would now put in the plea of insanity, since he rather loses than gains by the alternative. You would perhaps like to know what we do with our murderers after they have been sentenced."

"Naturally," I replied.

"I will tell you as briefly as possible" said my friend. "Those sentenced for life are kept in an entirely separate department of the prison, *without any outside communication*, and are consequently *dead* to the world; thus it is quite impossible that they can contaminate those who are undergoing punishment for minor offenses. They are kept at hard labor, are fed on plain but wholesome food, and the minister, the doctor, and their keepers are the only persons with whom they may confer. Death alone can unlock their prison gates."

"A thousand times worse than death!" I cried.

"Yes," replied G—— "So awful is their fate, that, since its horrors have been made known to the outside world, few have been found so hardy as to dare its terrors. Murder in the first degree is now, I trust, a crime of the past, for, during the last year, only two have

been added to their wretched number. I see that this astonishes you."

"It does indeed," I replied; "for I remember just before my unaccountable departure to the Moon of which I was not aware until you kindly mentioned it, I saw a list of the murders which had been reported in New York during the five years ending with January, 1876, with an account of the fate of the criminals. They footed up two hundred and eighty-one.

"It seems that a fourth of these criminals were allowed to escape punishment, without even the semblance of a trial; only seven suffered the extreme penalty, and the balance are now possibly roaming the land as free as you or I. But pray proceed, for I feel that you have much more to tell me."

"I have, with your permission," said G—. "It will interest you to learn that murderers of the second degree, serve out their respective terms under the same rigid regulations as those of the first, with the exceptions that they are at liberty to correspond occasionally with their nearest friends, and that the worst mannered are kept apart from the better disposed prisoners. An oath or an obscene expression is instantly punished by solitary confinement."

"Most admirable," I exclaimed; "but pray tell me how the majority of prisoners are treated—house-breakers, forgers, highway-robbers and so on."

"They," answered G—, "together with those undergoing sentence for manslaughter, endure a common fate as formerly, the better behaved being encouraged by little kindnesses at the discretion of the warden. He follows the wishes of the truly excellent chaplains who, through preaching the love of God instead of the fear

of the devil as it was once the fashion to do, bring many true penitents to the foot-stool. Not only is blasphemy and obscenity of any description promptly punished with severity in the case of the prisoners, but a keeper guilty of a similar sin is at once dismissed from the Institution. Nor are the keepers allowed to strike a blow except in self defense."

Stating my satisfaction at this intelligence, I asked whether there were as many pardons granted now as formerly.

"A pardon is of very rare occurrence," replied my friend: "even the best behaved are not encouraged to expect it, but good behavior meets with rewards that are not to be despised. 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating,' and moral suasion has done more to chain down the demon Crime in the City of Newer York, than past rough treatment of those who, for the sake of the public safety, have been temporarily incarcerated. The chief of police informs me that even such of the ex-convicts, who seek their old haunts, by their improved manner, and their decent mode of speech and bearing, exert a salutary influence on their fellows. First by compulsion, and afterwards from habit, and, in many instances, subsequent inclination—for whatever of manhood belonged to them is naturally enhanced by the admirable regulation with regard to speech and conduct, to which I have referred—their self respect is exalted, giving birth to a noble pride, which dies not in a day. This seems the proper time to tell you, lest the interesting fact may slip my memory, that the law now inflicts a fine or imprisonment on any citizen who is charged—the charge being proven—with uttering obscene or blasphemous language,



Something not seen in "Newer" York. (See page 39.)

the Society for the Prevention of Crime generally being prosecutor."

"Does not this entail great trouble and expense?" I asked.

"At first it did, but the penalty being rigidly enforced, the sin seems to have left our midst. Society my dear friend is now doing for itself, and by itself, far more towards the suppression of sin, than the best framed laws could effect in many years.

"There are men—their name is legion"—continued he, warming with the subject, "so thoroughly brutal and depraved, that they beat and stamp the life out of their wives and mothers. These men—wild beasts would be the most appropriate term—justice took but little cognizance of unless the woman died. Sometimes, instead of seeming 'cruel to be kind,' the judge was *kind to seem cruel*, and very wisely heeded not the prayer of the woman who with heaven-born love strove to save the inhuman wretch who had wantonly abused her. Poor unhappy being, she had to suffer for the common good. This is the rule in Newer York, and a man knows, now, that, drunk or sober, rich or poor, educated or ignorant, ten years will be the minimum penalty for such assault, be the woman his mother, wife, sister, child or neighbor. That very eccentric custom of knocking a helpless woman down and 'jumping' on her, to say nothing of kicking her face and head with heavy boots until they become a horribly mangled mass, from which the divine likeness has been utterly stamped out, is no longer a common pastime.

"There are many other excellent laws in force; but I could not enumerate them all, were I to remain here a week. I will mention one which occurs to me at this

moment, because it is one of society's most valuable safety valves. In New York you will remember a man could not be criminally prosecuted, for simply assaulting his fellow with foul abuse—for using epithets which you will better call to mind than I can offend my own lips and your ears by repeating. The abominable wretch who dares to pollute the ears of decent men with the foul utterances of his filthy tongue *now* goes to jail."

"The Lord be praised," I ejaculated. "But I say, old friend," I added, "this is a nice question, isn't it? Where do they draw the line?"

"Oh!" replied G—— with a smile, "I believe that the line is drawn at 'go to the devil.'"

"Why?" I asked.

"Because one is not obliged to go you know," answered G—— with a sly look. "You had better read up the laws of Newer York," he continued. "This subject alone takes up twenty pages of the statutes. I merely instruct you now that a gentleman is protected from the blackguard, no matter in what garb the latter may be attired. All respectable citizens are on the watch for such ruffians: in a word—society is against them."

"Am I to understand then, that social espionage has been established?" I asked.

"Precisely, if you do not apply the term in its offensive sense; and what this social espionage—perhaps watchfulness would be the better term,—has done for society you shall learn ere I take my leave. At present let me acquaint you with what the Law is doing for society. You remember doubtless that, at the time of your sudden departure from this mundane sphere, the police force was absurdly inadequate to the protection of the city; that about one thousand patrolmen were

given the impossible task of protecting forty-one square miles of property, and over one million human beings."

"I well remember it, and never marvelled, however much I might be horrified, when my morning paper informed me that the roughs of the city were knocking down elderly gentlemen like ten-pins, or that modest females had suffered treatment at which every decent mind revolts. Whatever faults the police possessed, and they were certainly many and grave, it was physically impossible that they could afford proper protection to the citizens of New York."

"Just so, and for that reason the force has been doubled. Had not every gambling house been closed by law, and had not every corner loafer been marched to the nearest station, there to give an account of himself, *five thousand* active and efficient officers would scarcely have sufficed. The Police Commissioners have been relieved of their responsibility with regard to the patrolling of private stores and buildings; this change has found employment for an army of honest men in the pay of large and wealthy proprietors. The force has been well weeded of all political appointees; of all who had been fined for drinking during the hours of duty; of all who had been on trial more than once for impertinence and ruffianism to a citizen, or improper language and indecent behavior to women. Then Newer York has more active missionaries than formerly; this helps the police. The Earl of Shaftsbury said, you know, that if London had not its four hundred city missionaries, it would have to employ forty thousand more police. Children are better looked after than formerly. The New York gamin used to fight and swear. The Newer York boy dare not."

"How about fresh appointments?" I asked.

G—informed me that, since thousands of excellent men sought a position on the force, none but those of fair education and who can satisfy the Committee of Appointments that they have never been convicted of any crime or misdemeanor, and, in fact, that they are entirely reliable, cool-headed, and courageous, could obtain employment.

"Then," said I, "the day is not far distant, when our Police force may with truth be called 'the finest in the world.'"

"It will inevitably become so; and, if you intend to remain among us for a time, you will discover that, however much politics have had, and still may have, to some little extent, to do with the workings of the 'police machine,' it will ere long become an independent institution, untrammelled by party interests, and so correspondingly honest and effective."

"Do you include roundsmen in the figures you have mentioned?" I asked.

"There is now no such an unfortunate being. The members of the force are relied on from the moment of their appointment, and they are far less likely to neglect their duty, or to tarnish the honor and manly dignity which such appointment naturally endorses, than they would be while conscious that their footsteps were being dogged by unhappy spies, whose bread and butter seemed to depend on their opportunities to catch an officer 'napping.'"

"So," said I, "Newer York is well protected by the police at the present time?"

"Fifty times better than ever New York was," replied G—. "But," added he, "my time is short, as

I wish to catch the one o'clock train to Harlem. We have an underground railway now, you know."

I didn't know anything of the sort, and quietly intimated the fact.

G——, thereupon, said that it had just been completed on the east side.

I asked him if the street cars were still running, and he answered in the affirmative, stating that there was employment for them. "But" continued he, "the several companies have had a rare overhauling."

"In what way?" I inquired.

"You cannot but remember," responded G——, "how nobly the *Herald* championed the rights of the people in this respect. No money that was ever coined could have purchased its silence. Neither the Companies nor the Legislature had any peace, for the *Herald* gave them broadside after broadside from its biggest guns, until at last the most frantic efforts of the Companies failed to smother a bill, compelling them to do their duty by the public. Their cry, that it would not pay, fell on deaf ears. What bribery had to do with the long delay can only be conjectured, as the *Morning Bitters* entered into no investigation at the time; but it seems that the shocking fact was not imaginative as at one time the cry was 'no hope from the Legislature.' A gentleman who doubtless did not write without authority, sent the following letter to the *Herald*:"

"Being one of the many unfortunates who are compelled to use the street cars to reach home, I always read with due thanks your suggestions to compel the street railway companies to give the much needed accommodation to their patrons—namely a seat. The Legislature will pass no such law at all, owing to the fact that two-

thirds of the men composing the Legislature, are always found to sell their vote for a glass of vile whiskey, if nothing better can be obtained otherwise. This being a sorrowful fact, nothing remains for the suffering public to do than to petition the press. As you are the best champion of all, it is hoped by all classes, who have to ride in the street cars, you will use your power and influence to reach the desired end without overreaching the companies by unjust enactments. If such a law could be passed as you suggested, in a very short space of time you would see new styles of cars adequate to the spirit of our progressive time. With due regard for your generous aid, I remain your constant reader.'

"The ridiculous and weak suggestion that passengers should not be obliged to pay fares, unless seats were provided for them, was received by the officers of the various companies with a grim smile. They had dealt too long with the public not to know that they would crowd in under all circumstance, and that few, if any, would refuse to pay their fare when called upon by the conductor to do so. Such a motion as this would have been mere loss of time, and the measure if carried would have proved ineffectual. The Common Council were blamed by all right-minded people for their culpable disregard of their evident duty in the matter. The Statute lately enacted is wise and effective. The cars are now built to contain a fixed number of passengers, each car has what is called in Europe a 'knife-board'—a double seat on the roof,—and so a great many passengers are accommodated; but if *one more* than the number prescribed by law is carried, a *very severe penalty* is the consequence. The Police keep an eye to this matter, so that the offense must meet retribution. No fault has been found with

the fares, although the profits of some of the Companies, especially of the Third Avenue Railroad, have been said to be enormous, their complaints to the contrary notwithstanding. The evidence furnished by some of the conductors with regard to the indecent and painful exhibitions witnessed both by day and by night, almost staggered belief. Not all that was said before the investigating Committee appeared in the public prints, but enough was made known to excite the popular mind against the companies, although I must say that the indifference of the people to these and many other similar nuisances, renders them almost unworthy of any attempt that is made in their behalf. There is not another civilized people in the whole world who would have borne with one-quarter of the annoyance that had been so long inflicted upon them by some of the Railroad Companies.

“‘I have witnessed,’ said one conductor, ‘what has made me sick with mortification and anger. I have seen women literally gasping for breath in my car, into which, in spite of the popular belief that a conductor can always find *room for one more*, I could not have squeezed the *living skeleton*.’

“He went on to say, that it was always the men, and not the older ones neither, who closed up every aperture in the car; ladies generally prayed for fresh air. Sometimes with a mixed crowd of eighty or ninety he said, that the stench was abominable, and that he would have much preferred to travel the distance with cattle than with human beings. Another conductor, a respectable looking man, told the committee that the scenes in a crowded car, were sometimes not far from being bestial. On this and other lines licence was given to creatures

in the form of men, but who were more to be despised than the brute, which was offered him in no other place where decent women are congregated. 'I have heard,' he added, 'remarks which have not only brought a blush to the faces of the young females for whom they were intended, but which made me inclined to break the brutish heads of those who gave utterance to them.' In these vehicles a tender girl would be forced almost into the arms of some notorious rough, or, likely enough, ex-convict, to remain in that position, perhaps, for one hour or more. It is not likely that a lady having once endured such agony (what would have been her sensations had she known the true nature of the man whom the Railroad Company licensed to hustle and indecently molest her sex !) would ever again put herself in a similar position. But that *once* could never be forgotten.'

"Another conductor said that that he had seen many a young creature, with burning cheek seared with hot tears of shame, too modest to appeal for protection against the *thing* who was permitted by the Railroad Company to insult lady passengers, and too timid to stop the car and descend from it, which she would gladly have done even if she had to walk home bare-footed.

" 'I know,' said another, 'that we carry some brazen hussies who delight in conduct which is detested and almost worse than death to the majority of their sex, whose down town avocations compel them to use the cars.'

" 'The truth is,' said a fourth conductor, 'that some men—I won't say gentlemen,' he added, bluntly—'liked all this sort of pressing, hugging and indecent contiguity, while modesty forbade the women to discuss, or, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, even to men-

tion at home so delicate a subject ; and thus nothing was done to stop the monstrous abuse.”

“Thank God!” cried my friend, “complaints made to the Press, proved that we had a few individuals in our midst, who respected their own manhood too much not to exclaim against the rapacity of some companies which had become enriched at the expense of public health and morality. One said :

“‘Sunday evening about seven o’clock, in company with my wife and baby, I was compelled to take a Third Avenue Car at 116th street, and found it so full, that it was almost impossible to enter the door, fifteen persons standing upon the inside, and five on both front and rear platforms. The conductor gave us the consoling words, he would give us a transfer at the depot. My wife (an invalid), was obliged to stand the entire distance (three miles) without a seat. There is no excuse for the Company not being able to furnish seats to those entering the car at nearly the commencement of the route. It will soon be that the cars will not start from the depot until they are filled.’”

“These conductors were right, every one of them,” I said.

“Yes indeed,” responded G——, “there are thousands of young women who will never forget, but who will always remember them with gratitude for their testimony. I was informed that the daughter of one of these Directors indignantly refused to enter with a male companion, probably her noble (?) father, a Third Avenue Car, which was filled to overflowing.”

“But it was to a few such letters as this,” said my friend, referring to a paper which he had in his pocket, “that Newer York is indebted, next to James Gordon

Bennett, who is very gratefully thought of by the ladies, especially those residing in Harlem.

G—— read :

“As a daily traveller on the city railroad cars, I tender you my hearty thanks for the public spirit which you have shown in grappling with the gross over-crowding system, which identifies the policy of every street railroad company in the city, and disgraces the boasted liberties, and morals also, of the people. Sir, the thanks of the city are due to you for your championship of those liberties and morals, the more so, because the rights which you have resolved to vindicate, must be wrested from rich and powerful corporations, which it would seem, neither the municipality of this great city, nor the people themselves have the courage to attack in downright earnest. Your object is not yet accomplished ; but when it shall be accomplished—as it will sooner or latter—the people of this city will regard you as one of the greatest public benefactors of the age. I do not intend to occupy your valuable space by exposing the evils of this system of over-crowding. Unfortunately those evils are too well known in the every day experience of all who travel on the cars. Sanitary science condemns it ; good manners and every moral sense are put to shame by it ; the law prohibits it ; but it seems the executive officers of the law waive the statutory penalties in favor of its violators, and sanction a high handed breach of what was and is the keystone and the *sine qua non* of the companies’ charters. Let the people see to it, that the pledges which were made when the charters were granted are respected. Surely there is public spirit enough in the “land of liberty” not to tolerate any corporation which would dare treat American citi-

zens as so many cattle, transporting them *like* cattle at so many cents per 100 pounds weight, for it practically amounts to that. What will our cousins think of us when they come over this year? Where is anything of the kind found in Europe? What moral sense would not be shocked, to witness as may be witnessed every day, that *a la mode* sardine packing of males and females enforced proximity, which, it is well known, frequently subjects maidens to indignities and embarrassment from which they cannot escape, and which they dare not resent? How many pickpockets take their first lessons in crowded cars? It is high time this intolerable nuisance were ended. Seats are the right of the people, providing seats that of the car companies, and with your all powerful help the people will get seats."

"I suppose there was a hard fight to obtain this glorious victory?" I said, as soon as the admirable letter had been read.

"Yes," he replied, "it was hot work. When the improprieties were touched upon, one of the Directors rolled up his eyes and murmured: 'To the pure, all things are pure,' gentlemen. Whereat an excited old gentleman, quite forgetting himself, although he was forgiven by nearly every body on the spot, exclaimed 'd—— you, Sir, do you suppose that my pure daughter, or your's if you've got one—I hope for her sake you have'nt—would see much *purity* in the pickpocket, prize-fighter, or other infernal ruffians, whom you and the other cussed directors invite to elbow ladies, squirt tobacco juice over them, and otherwise molest them. I'd send all you infernal directors to jail, confound you!'

"That old member helped to squeeze the bill through, you may be sure."

“How do the cars work now?” I inquired.

“Very well; the company have had to put a few more cars on at certain hours, and this, added to the fact that a number of overgrown louts, and full-fledged exquisites, who the first from their laziness, and the second for the purpose of ogling and otherwise insulting decent women, had theretofore sought seats or standing room, now walk. This not only relieves Newer York from considerable dyspepsia, but it adds to the many manly graces of the aforesaid exquisites who don't see half the fun in the cars now-a-days. The public are also rejoicing over the consequences of a new bill touching ferry monopoly, and which has put a stop to the brutal overcrowding that used to exist, and which, at certain hours of the day, jeopardised human life: added to this, measures have been taken to guard against all mishaps arising from undue haste and impetuosity in catching a boat. For this public safeguard I believe Newer York is indebted to its journals, which, at various times, have devoted much space to this subject. We newspaper men have thus lost one frequent item, ‘fatal jump for a ferry-boat.’ The bridge has, of course, deprived the boats of many *Brooklyn* residents, but an army of nervous folk stick to the ferries, and, to tell the truth, the swaying of the monster *pont* is somewhat alarming in certain weathers.”

Having heard all I cared to learn about street-cars and ferries, I wished to be informed whether the stage lines were allowed to be crowded as formerly.

“No, indeed,” was the reply. “The law touches them equally with the cars, and heavy fines have been inflicted, much to the consternation of the owners. Moreover, every stage now has its conductor. This arrangement has rendered the Broadway stage line far

more reputable than formerly, for, since the conductors are for the most part intelligent and respectable men who have been made special officers of arrest, as, I omitted to inform you, have also the car conductors, brazen women and their fancy men—the pick-pockets—who once infested the line, no longer curse it. The consequence is that down town merchants with abnormally developed craniums are *considerably more attentive at home, and complain less of hard times!*”

G——, who had worked himself into a somewhat excited state during his eloquent remarks, mopped his forehead and referred to his watch. But if he was excited I was no less so, and, eager to detain him, asked what had followed Justice Wandell’s suggestion before the Committee of Crime, touching the duties of the Health Board with respect to the prosecution of vendors of impure liquors which he considered was as necessary as the punishment of the dealers in swill-milk.”

“A very proper question for me, who has lately investigated the ‘milky way’ on his return from the moon,” remarked G——. Presently he continued: “Shocking, and almost beyond belief, as it may appear, the people of New York were, at the beginning of the Centennial year, being slowly poisoned by adulterations and impurities in what they ate and drink—a fact disgraceful to the power that could, but would not enforce laws already made, and form new ones to meet the exigencies of the case. Our sugars were frequently alive with *acari*, or lice, and their eggs, while they contained filthy fungi, cane, earth and foul sweepings; arrowroot was represented by potato, flour and starch; peppers were mixed with earthy dust; water was contaminated with *living* vegetable and animal impurities which bred dis-

ease at an alarming rate ; chicory was associated with red earth and unwholesome roots ; mustard was a mixture of wheaten flour and turmeric ; alum, among other bad things, was in our bread, and it became matter of grave doubt whether the *acarus farina* or meal-mite did not run riot in much of our flour, rendering it unfit for consumption ; mangelwurzel was mixed with our ground coffee ; farinaceous foods were base pretenders, and even modest oatmeal turned pale at the presence of barley meal ; much of our tea was colored with poisonous mineral matter, and mixed with dried weeds ; flour, starch, gum, turmeric and carbonate of soda brought discredit on honest cows—the use of chalk, however, was proved to be a fiction ; isinglass was an odoriferous glue ; sulphuric and other acids were some of the constituents of vinegar ; pickles were rendered dangerous by the presence of copper, verdigris and sulphuric acid ; spices were not at all what they were cracked up to be, as the analyst was fully aware when it became *his* duty to *crack them up* ; preserved provisions were frequently putrid, being concoctions of all kinds of refuse, fit only for the garbage barrel ; drugged beers drove many to madness ; cayenne pepper was a delusion and a snare, red earth, brick dust and sulphurate of mercury being mixed up with it ; copper colored our preserved fruits ; anchovies were sardines ; inferior tobaccos were daubed with a syrup of sugar and lime ; snuff was to be sneezed at in more than one sense ; every poisonous pigment known was employed in confectionery ; capsicum, molasses and liquorice were present in porter ; spirituous liquors were rendered fiery and maddening by benzine, turpentine, tincture of capsicum and cayenne ;

while butter was heavy with water and lard, besides being rancid and worked over.

“The people of Newer York are now no longer at the mercy of fraudulent dealers, it having become the business of a Sanitary Committee to report any individual who palms off on an unsuspecting public any impure or adulterated article. A heavy fine covers the first offense while the second is followed by imprisonment—the term discretionary. The crime of bribery in such cases has now ceased to exist as it did at first to some extent, for the reason that each party to the offense has been sent to the State prison for five years. The sale of any article which is represented to be, and disposed of for what it is not, endangers the pocket and freedom of him who *knowingly* perpetrated the fraud. Weights and scales are under constant and rigorous examination. He who sells a bushel of coal, potatoes or what not short, is amenable to the before-mentioned law. Butchers who deal in diseased meat suffer in common with other fraudulent dealers. Bread is sold by the pound, the price being between the dealer and the public—competition proving the latter’s safeguard ; but woe be to him against whom complaint is made touching short weight. The dealer in foods which are poisonously adulterated are subjected to the highest penalties. The law naturally includes the first cause—the manufacturer.

The brewers and the concocters of spurious liquors receive the most delicate attention at the hands of the Sanitary squad, and although the latter’s visits must, in many cases, be naturally few and far between, the certainty of their presence at some unknown time keeps all infringers of the law on their good behavior, the penalty

being wholesomely held *in terrorem* over their devoted heads."

"Consequently," I ventured to remark, "the retail liquor business has become somewhat of a dead letter in Newer York."

"Quite the reverse," responded G——; "for thousands of moderate drinkers who once did not dare to run the risk of being killed, and therefore withheld their custom, are now enabled to meet their moderate desires with the full knowledge that however weak the potation may be—for the plentiful use of water has not been interdicted—it will be free from its former disgusting elements. And now you have heard all I can tell you on this vital question."

"Is intemperance on the increase or decrease?" I inquired.

"Decidedly on the decrease," was the answer. "It was the abuse and not the use of ardent beverages that brought so much calamity on society; and the legislature has properly ordered that any drunken man, no matter what his station in life, be treated as a lunatic. That is to say, he is imprisoned until it is believed he can take care of himself, and has renewed his manhood. When you 'rob a poor man of his beer,' you take from him a refreshing, exhilarating and nutritive beverage."

"How nutritive?" I asked.

"Because of its extractive matter—the carbohydrates. Its bitter principle renders it a stomachic and tonic, and with most people it promotes digestion."

"In moderation," I suggested.

"My dear friend," remarked G——, "the fool may drink to excess, the wise man knows when to stop. You

may depend upon it that those who cry out against the use of good and wholesome beer are like the victims of salmon eating; owing to some physiological reasons, their systems reject it. It may be said of beer as the old Billingsgate fishmonger remarked of his salmon:—‘Lor’ bless you, sir, that there fish do go agin’ some folk most tremenjuous. I s’pose it gets in their ’eads or their legs, for I’ve het sammin nigh on forty year, and I *knows* it’s good for the stummick.’

“Those who cannot drink without ill effects are taught what their manhood should instill into them, although it frequently fails to do so, that they are not fit to remain at large; but since nine tenths of the inebriates formerly brought to justice were reduced to their disgusting condition, not by the quantity but by the quality of what they had imbibed, and since only pure liquors are now for sale in Newer York, intoxication is almost becoming an evil of the past. Another good thing has been definitely settled. There is now no longer any sneaking in at the back door to get a glass of wholesome beer or lager on Sundays. Only decorum is needed, and in this matter we copy the Germans, as in many others, to our advantage. *If it be not a sin to drink lager on a week day, it is not a crime to partake of it on Sunday.* Therefore it flows merrily but wisely, for the intemperate know the inevitable penalty and become temperate.”

G—— evidently seemed to be wound up to go on with his truly interesting discourse; for, scarcely granting himself time to properly charge his lungs with oxygen, he thus eloquently proceeded:

“Respect for the law of the land is vitally essential to the moral progress of a people; New York did not honor, and but poorly obeyed it—principally because some of

its administrators failed to do it proper reverence ; and 'confusion worse confounded' reigned where Order, 'Heaven's first law,' should have been enthroned. The decorum which exists in the courts of Newer York, and especially in General Sessions, now equals that of any European court. No longer are District attorney and his colleagues the A1 criminal lawyer and *his* colleagues, the favored reporter and friends of the aforesaid, the clerk of the court, the jailors and a detective or two, allowed to be jumbled together, or permitted to engage in the noisy or litigious discord which at one time disgraced the court and insulted the presiding judge, who hesitated to break a custom that had grown by small degrees into a recognized abuse. Again, there is not the same publicity given to crime now. The fallen woman, for instance, is borne off privately from the court in the 'black Maria.' The public cannot feast its eyes on her."

"Recorder Hackett no doubt inaugurated this change," I suggested.

"He did. No presiding judge was ever more remarkable for calm dignity. He quietly though firmly infused a proper sentiment of the respect that is due to the law. The indecent jest which so frequently cropped out during proceedings that involved the life of a human being, is not now permitted to offend ears polite, or sensitive. The criminal lawyer of Newer York has to seek fresh pastures on which to feed his love of the ridiculous, or his especial capacity for airing an ill-timed *bonmot*. At one time there was little awe inspired by the proceedings of a court, and its tragic edicts lost much of their wholesome influence on the body social and political. Even the friends of the condemned dried their tears to grin over some conceit of counsel, and the *facilis descen-*

sus averno seemed to become even more than traditionally well greased. Those who had as yet hesitated to assume the mantle of crime mentally put themselves in the place of the condemned without a shudder, and many still comparatively innocent, but who only needed occasion to invoke the devil that was in them, watched the proceedings with an even pulse; and because the funny counsellor seemed to think the criminal such a capital fellow, contemplated their own possible presence there at some future time, or wondered whether innocence was not being sacrificed for the sake of a little legal sport and practice."

"Ah!" said I, "one hundred years ago things were different; so much for political abuses; the lower classes should not be admitted into our courts; for,

'Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet, seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.'

"Most true. But, thank the fates, crime is once again beginning to be held in abhorrence. That which at the commencement of the Centennial year was the common talk—even extending to the household—of most classes of society, is now only referred to in whispers. Virtue so long banished once more holds her court, and the people of Newer York worship at her shrine, while vice hides its diminished head, seeking only the foulest nooks and corners, and not daring to stalk in the broad daylight, as heretofore, in the pure garb it had filched from virtue."

"Having given you an idea of the beneficial changes in our courts, it gives me much pleasure to inform you that the judges of Newer York utterly eschew politics."

"Glorious news, indeed!" I responded; "so sacred an

office as that of a dispenser of justice should be untrammelled by party sentiment."

"Certainly," answered G——; "and richly are they rewarded by the proper reverence in which they are held by the public. The clamorous army of unprincipled office-seekers no longer hang on to and befoul the sacred robe. The truly sad spectacle of justice hobnobbing with rum-stained politicians no longer grieves and disgusts the public eye, and our future judges will be selected for what they are worth, irrespective of qualifications which formerly satisfied the political caucus; while with higher aim and nobler purpose they wait for, rather than seek, the crown of laurel.

"Let me not forget to add that our judges are now elected for life with increased incomes. This is an inducement for our greatest legal minds to resign the emoluments of a large practice—the certainty of a retiring pension being thrown into the balance."

"The legislature has been busy during my temporary sojourn with the man in the moon. Has it acted on Judge Brady's opinion touching the habit of pistol carrying?" I asked.

"It has, and his remarks on the conviction of one guilty of felonious assault were embodied in the bill. The law now enacts not only that imprisonment shall follow the unlawful carrying of a knife or razor, but that whosoever shall be found with a pistol on his person, unless he also bear with him a license to possess it, shall meet with similar retribution. Thus no person of bad repute, or even of doubtful character, dares to carry on his person such a weapon, except on peril of his liberty for a period of not less than twelve months. The act has secured to the public just what the worthy judge afore-

said deemed it expedient that it should have. It now gives to men of good reputation whose exposure may require it the right to carry the pistol, while thieves, burglars, violent drunkards and men of bad reputation, to whom no license would be granted, will subject themselves to the penalty if they violate the law, and double punishment if caught with it while attempting or after perpetrating a crime. By such a statute a peaceable law-abiding citizen has an advantage over the reckless and lawless, and a superior place, to which he is entitled."

"This must have proved most beneficial in its results," I remarked. "But has no misuse been made of the privilege?"

"Only in one or two instances by timorous and nervous persons. To such at the present day no license is granted. Bear in mind that any hasty or improper use of the pistol entails punishment, even on those who are licensed to carry it. You may well believe that the rougher element is thus kept at bay—the wild beast is being gradually tamed, and may eventually become a decent member of society."

"At the time," I remarked, "when, in a moment of mental aberration, I ventured to journey through the infinite space, society was verging on a maelstrom of abominations which made the very name of New York stink in the nostrils of philanthropy. Had it been possible thoroughly to canvas the public mind and feel its pulse, I would venture to say that it would have beaten in sympathy with many a state criminal who made haste to get rich at the expense of honor and humanity, rather than have quickened in proper horror."

"Since that time, my friend," responded G——, "we have been taught to see our danger. The power which the immortal Burns so beautifully invoked fell like Heaven's balm upon the city, and we began to understand the meaning of individual responsibility."

In answer to my query whether the "social evil" was as prevalent as formerly, G—— remarked that the question continued to puzzle the wisest heads. "Precedent," he said, "has proven that to stop this terrible traffic entirely is what no law can accomplish. But society is doing more for Newer York with regard to the evil than can be accomplished by law."

"In what way?" I asked.

"In various ways. Mothers bring up their daughters to regard young men of dissolute habits as moral lepers who are to be shunned. The science of physiology has become more than formerly a study proper to the household; girls in their teens are taught to know the dangers which beset them—taught by their mothers—the only human beings from whom they should learn such things—taught just as much as, and no more than it is good and decent for budding womanhood to be acquainted with. Science with its mighty strides has walked over silly prejudice, and left it far behind. Fathers guard their dear ones from contamination by closing their doors against the known libertine, who discovers that, unless he mend his ways, Newer York is no abode for him."

"This touches at the root of the evil," I exclaimed with pleasure, "for were it not for the seducer prostitution would be an impossibility."

"That is just what I was coming to," said G——. "Not only does the violator of female chastity find himself a social outcast, but any citizen is empowered to

bring a criminal charge against him, and unless immediate marriage can be agreed upon, the law will hold him a prisoner for a term of years, the time being proportionate to his own individual guilt in the matter. The youth of Newer York are thus held in check by a wholesome dread of what must surely follow, as the result of a libidinous career; and, turning to the pure of the other sex, they select from their number one to whom they tender a proper devotion; and so early marriages have become the order of the day. Amelioration is all that we can dare to hope for with regard to the "social evil"; but, if it be possible to eradicate the fell disease, we are certainly on the high road to its accomplishment."

"Now," cried G——, buttoning his coat, "I am off."

"One moment," said L. "How about the Brooklyn scan—"

My question remained unfinished for, to my astonishment and affright, as I spoke G—— strode towards the closed door, and disappeared like a phantom through two inches of black walnut.

I was about to follow him, when a hand was placed on my arm, and a pair of soft lips were pressed to my forehead, while a voice that I knew to be my wife's said:

"How could you go to sleep in this cold room! Come to bed, you look haggard and feverish."

I obeyed mechanically, and not before refreshing sleep had dispelled my fever did I arrive at the conclusion that the previous night's interview had existed only in my dream.

This having furnished me with better material for my paper on social crimes and abuses than wide-awake thought could bestow on short notice, after destroying

my incubation which probably had ushered me into dreamland, I penned this narrative, but not before I had obtained B——'s freedom, and sent him home to his anxious wife.

THE END.

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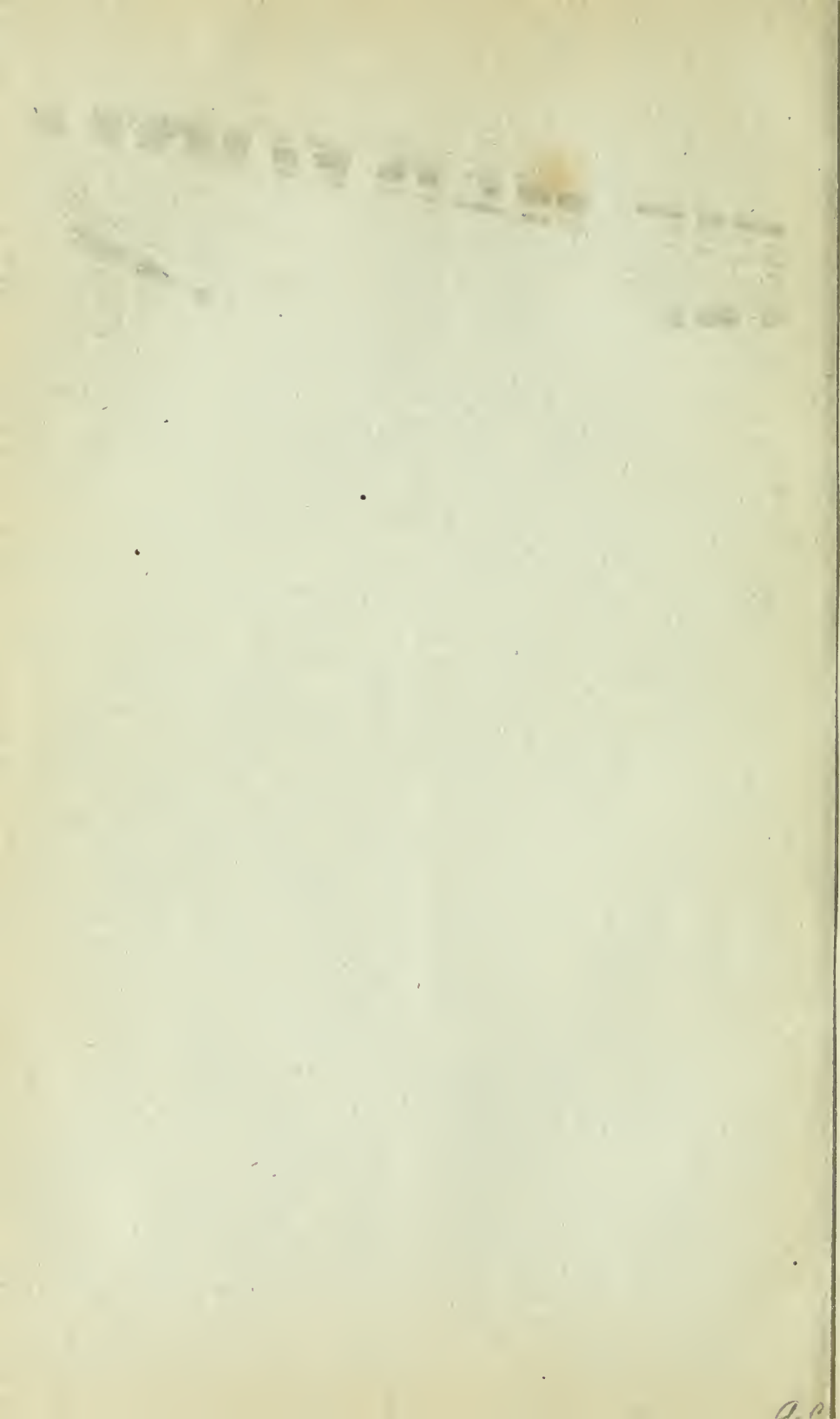
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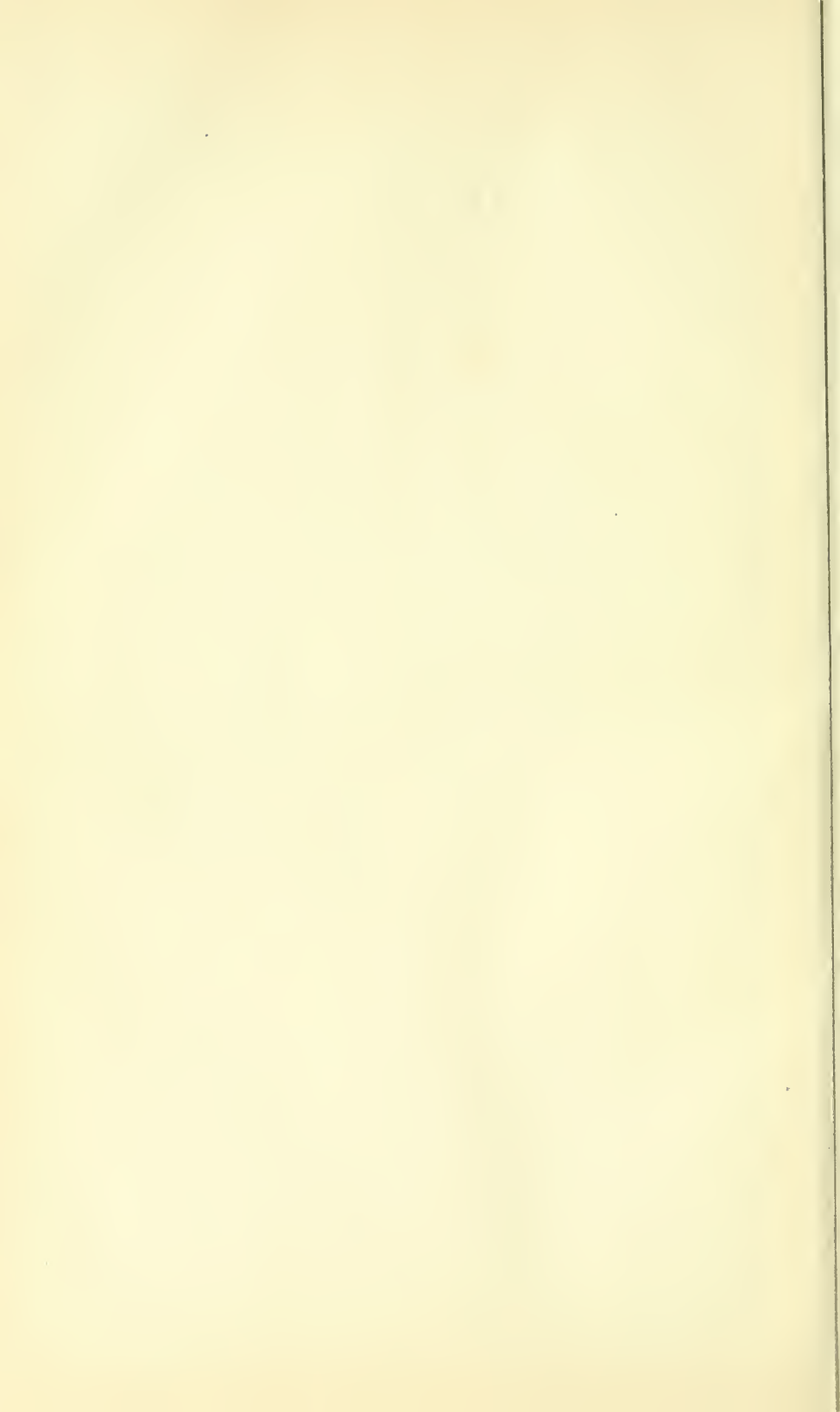
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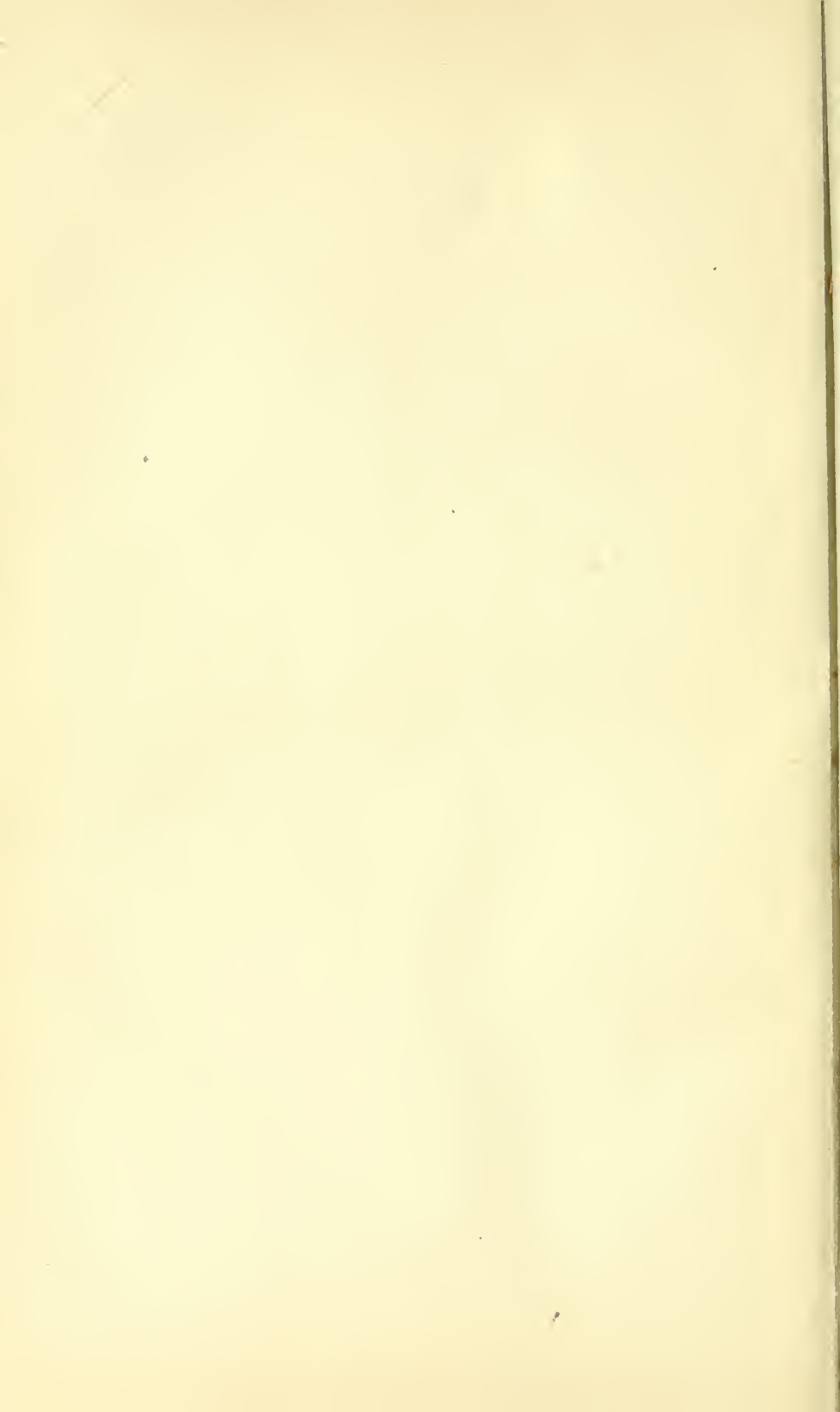
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